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BAPTIST NUMBER

WILLIAM S. ABERNETHY
Calvary Baptist church, Washington, D. C.
"Victory Won in Advance"

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK
Riverside church, New York City
"The Meaning of Crisis in Human Life"

CHARLES W. GILKEY
Dean University of Chicago Chapel
"A Religion of One's Own"

BERNARD C. CLAUSEN
First Baptist church, Pittsburgh
"My Most Awful Thought"

J. WHITCOMB BROUGHER
Tremont Temple Baptist church, Boston
"Service and Success"

ALBERT W. BEAVEN
President Colgate-Rochester Divinity School
"United Churches in a Divided World"

HAROLD C. PHILLIPS
First Baptist church, Cleveland
"Enduring Hardships"

CLARENCE A. BARBOUR
President Brown university
"A Pastoral Prayer"

PREACHER PROBLEMS

FRANK FITT
Grosse Point Presbyterian church, Grosse Point, Mich.
"The Minister's Inner Growth"

Victory Won in Advance

BY WILLIAM S. ABERNETHY

In the world you have trouble but take courage! I have conquered the world. John 16:33. (Goodspeed)

WHO EVER heard of announcing the victory before the battle was fought! And yet that is precisely what Jesus is doing here. When he said this, Gethsemane and Calvary were yet to be met. Within twenty-four hours from the time he said "I have overcome the world," Joseph would be carrying his limp form over to the private burying ground in a garden to give it decent interment. The cause would be in a state of utter collapse so far as human judgment could determine. His disciples would be in hiding and seeming chaos would reign. And yet on the eve of all that, Jesus is saying: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Overcome, if I know anything about the meaning of the word, means to gain the victory, to win. Jesus proclaimed himself the winner a full twenty-four hours before he met the test which ended in what practically all Jerusalem called defeat. Mind you, it is the past tense he uses. He did not say, "I will overcome." Had he said that, it might mean that years hence when the opposition had weakened and his own followers had increased in strength, the tide might be turned and victory won. But the verb's tense is past and not future. The ultimate victory is so certain that he speaks of it as already secured.

From time to time, prophets of gloom have arisen to tell us that the cause which Jesus espoused is doomed. Not only is the church dying, but Christianity itself has spent itself and will soon be a dead issue, they tell us. They go even farther than that and say that God is but a fiction that is rapidly fading out. He may have been quite a convenience when men knew less than they do now, but having reached our present state of

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knowledge we can do quite well without him. "Good-bye, God. Thanks for past favors, but we can go it alone from now on." Some men who have been educated beyond their intelligence are talking in such terms today. And very likely they have a good deal of evidence to support their findings. It is true that many questions which a generation ago were considered settled are wide open questions today. It is true that the very existence of God is now being challenged. It is undoubtedly true that in some sections, at least, the church seems to be waning, having long since lost contact with the people. It is true that Christian standards once jealously guarded are being ignored and even flouted today. What has happened to the moral fiber of our nation? Are we forgetting our standards? Are our ideals one after the other passing into eclipse? Are we going the way of ancient Rome? Thus do my thoughts run now and then as I look at and listen to what is going on about me. And when I get to thinking in such terms, I hear One saying, "I have overcome the world." Remembering that, I say to these prophets of gloom and to these makers of evil: "I don't believe a word you say. You will not win for the reason that one stronger than you has already won."

"I have overcome the world," is not the over-confident cry of one who underestimates the strength of the forces against him. Jesus is not simply stating a devout wish that he entertained in his heart, something he hoped would come true. It is not even a prediction of victory. It was a plain statement that victory was already achieved. He knew that there were permanent values in what he had been giving to the world, and that eventually victory was as certain as that day would follow night.

But this statement of his, while it greatly cheers me at times when I begin to wonder if the tides of modern life are not sweeping away many of the ideals I had long cherished, interests me from another angle. That past tense he uses grips me. "I have overcome." When I read that and remind myself that the real battle had not yet been fought, I begin to say: "Is this thing possible? Can it be that tomorrow's issue may be settled today? Can I win my battles even before they begin?"

I

We may win today's victories before the day begins. There is a good deal in the way we begin. My watch was not keeping as good time as it should. I knew it was capable of better work than it was doing, for it contained an excellent movement. To the jeweler I went, and told him that while my timepiece furnished me approximate results, I could not rely upon it with any great degree of confidence.

"When do you wind your watch?" he asked.

"Just before I go to bed at night, of course, just as everybody else does."

"But you are wrong in thinking that everybody else winds his watch at that time. The men who want their watches to keep accurate time don't wind them at the close of the day but at the beginning, when they get up in the morning."

"You see," he went on to say, "that watch of yours gets many a jar during the course of the day. Its delicate mechanism is shaken with every step you take on the hard pavement. It is well to begin the day on a strong spring."

Since my jeweler told me that, I have been winding my watch in the morning and it keeps better time. But that man did more for me than to tell me how to treat a pocket timepiece. As I left him I found myself turning over in my mind what he had said to me: "Your watch gets many a jar. Start the day on a strong spring." Yes, and so do my feelings get many a jar during the course of the day. My opinions, my hopes and desires are all subjected to sudden and unexpected jars. Some days are worse than others but it is a rare day when somebody, through thoughtlessness or rudeness or undue haste, does not jar me. "Wouldn't that jar you?" is a bit of modern slang which the purists do not indulge in, of course, but it has reference to something that is happening throughout the course of every common day with each one of us. Not only nerves, but sensibilities and poise are being constantly jarred, and when this happens the results are apt to be disastrous. Traffic experts say that the late afternoon hours bring more accidents than any other time of the day. When people are returning from the day's work and their nerves are frayed, their resistance is low and their muscles do not respond as quickly as they should; then the accidents pile up.

"Begin the day on a strong spring," has its application to people who are living this intense modern life. If I begin it well fortified, it stands to reason that I am going to be able so much the better to meet the tests that may come up. Any experienced automobile driver before starting on a long trip will have his car carefully checked over. Are the batteries in good condition and the oil fresh? Is the gas tank well supplied with fuel? An all day trip at forty or fifty miles per hour is going to make heavy demands on his motor. If he plans to reach his destination, he had better make sure that he starts adequately equipped. Today's tests? I do not know what they will be but I know I shall have to meet them. Yesterday I did and the day before. They will come today. My patience will be tried by some exacting unreasonable person. Some automobile driver who wants the whole road and does not want me to have any of it, is almost sure to address me in any but genteel terms. I shall need to be fortified as I step over the threshold of this untried day, and thank God I can be, as everyone who prays knows.

II

We may win tomorrow's victories today.

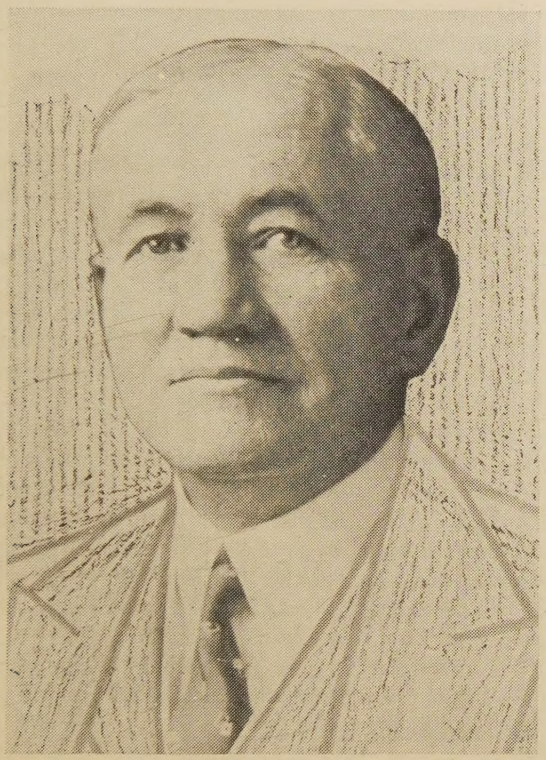
She was bidding her daughter good-bye. The girl was about to take a train for New York. From there she was due to sail for India on missionary service, not to return for seven years. A little group of friends had come down to the station to see her off. I saw this mother bid her daughter good-bye with a happy smile on her face. The prospective missionary got aboard the train and stood on the rear platform. Then came the conductor's "All aboard," and the train pulled out. We waved at her until we could no longer see her. Then I turned to the mother. She was still

smiling. I expected to see her in tears, but there was not a sign of one, only smiles.

"How could you be so brave?" I said to her.

"O, I fought this battle out days ago," she said. And she had won her victory! The tears were all shed days before the parting and the victory was won, probably in the seclusion of her closet.

One of the pathetic things of life comes to light when people find themselves at close grips with some unexpected situation for which they are wholly unprepared. I have witnessed such scenes and it always tries my soul. To stand face to face with sorrow that comes with all the suddenness of the lightning flash,



WILLIAM S. ABERNETHY

and no resources at hand with which to meet it; to be stripped of every material possession and have no spiritual resources to fall back upon; to be suddenly taken out of a life of activity and laid on a bed of suffering with no hope of getting up again. How can a person meet such situations if his spiritual reserves are low? Frankly, I do not know, and yet again and again have I seen people exactly in that situation, facing trouble that was overwhelming with a paucity of spiritual reserve energy. To fortify oneself against the day when we shall need every possible source of strength, is surely the part of wisdom. What is the purpose of the church service on Sunday morning? Is it intended to be a sort of sedative for tired nerves and wearied bodies after a week of toil? It would be worth while if it accomplished that, surely, but it is intended to be much more than that. Here one may replenish his wasted reserves and burnish up his armor. Here one may get himself in trim for the unexpected and critical situations which he is likely to meet in the days of the week just ahead. To win tomorrow's victory today—that is an achievement well worth while.

III

We may win in childhood the victories of adulthood. In that delightful little book, "The widow O'Callaghan's Boys," Jim, one of the boys, wants to know if his mother thinks he can have a bank some day, like General Brady. "There you go, Jim," says his mother. "If you've got a bank in your eye, you'd best pay particular attention to your dustin' and dishwashin'. Them's your two first steps. The Lord niver puts little bys and big jobs togither. He gives the little bys a chance at the little jobs and them as does the little jobs faithful gets to be the big men that does the big jobs easy." Excellent philosophy was this that the widow O'Callaghan kept in stock. How true it is that the child is father to the man. Character is pretty largely determined by the time a person is twenty-one. What he is at that age he is quite apt to be at seventy-five. The anchors we throw out in our younger years tend to hold us steady when the heavy responsibilities of maturity are upon us. So many of the big questions have to be settled in the first third of the average person's life. If one could only wait until he had reached the age of sixty, for example, before he was compelled to decide what college he would attend and what he should take up when he got there, what his life work should be, whom he should choose for his life companion! But no, these questions and others perhaps equally momentous must be decided in the younger years—and how much depends upon them!

IV

We win in this generation victories for the next. At least we lay the groundwork for the victories the next generation will win. We little realize, perhaps, how profoundly one generation affects and even shapes the next. Just what sort of children the offspring of this present generation of cigarette smoking women are going to be, it is too early as yet to determine. Only since the war has the practice really become common. We must wait another fifteen or twenty years before we can know what is really happening. However, if the practice does not show in the health, the mentality and the morals of the children of the future, it will be strange indeed. Thank God that the virtues as well as the vices of the parents are visited upon the children. Men and women of this day may have a good deal to say about the standards that will prevail a generation hence, and even more about the character of those who will set those standards. The responsibility of parenthood is one of the most pressing that God gives to human beings. Someone has suggested that it might be well, if only it could be arranged, for one generation to step off the stage before another one comes on. They get in each other's way, he thinks. The older generation does not understand the younger and the younger thinks the older is made up of old fogies. Thus they interfere with each other. It is a groundless fear. Even if it could be brought about, it would not be a happy arrangement. We need each other. The example we are giving, the teaching we are inculcating,

are going to bear fruit twenty-five, fifty years hence. How do I know that? I know it from my own experience, for certain elements of life that I can distinctly trace back to childhood days are present today and helping mightily in the serious business of living.

They were in the very depths of despair, these disciples. Jesus was leaving them soon. They understood it thoroughly now. They could see no possible hope for their enterprise with their leader gone. Bitterly disappointed and utterly discouraged they were, until Jesus calmly remarks, "Cheer up, men, I have already won the victory." And I am of the opinion that a victory won in advance saves us a great deal of nervous energy and anxiety at the last moment.

The Meaning of Crisis in Human Life

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

One day is with the Lord as a thousand years. 2 Peter 3:8b.

WE are continually told in these days that mankind faces a dangerous crisis. Many people, I suspect, think of that situation as in itself abnormal. Life, they suppose, ought to be smooth, progressive, and even; when it is normal it should flow in a deep and even current; but these rapids and waterfalls, these crises in the stream, they resent as though they did not belong there.

This predisposition of the modern mind to expect of life smooth and gradual progressiveness, is mainly due, I suppose, to the doctrine of evolution. Of course the scientists know that evolution has not been gradual. They know that it has come by leaps and bounds, by fits and starts, that it has been full of regressions and collapses and that about the last thing with which one can compare the course of biological evolution is a smoothly flowing stream. Popular imagination, however, picturing the evolutionary process in such symbols as the growth of a tree, has come to think that normal human life ought to be gradual, not critical; ought to travel an even road, not turn sharp corners; ought to flow in streams, not leap in cataracts. All of which is radically to misunderstand life.

Birth is not simply a gradual, even process, but a crisis, as every mother knows. Death is not a matter of evolutionary progressiveness; it is a crisis, as every one of us will find out. And, between birth and death, crisis is as integral a part of real life as gradualness is, so that any man or nation that does not know how to handle these crucial periods when great matters are condensed into brief decisions, when at the fork of a road a long future may depend on what is done in a moment, is not facing life as it really is.

In the New Testament, in a letter ascribed to Peter, we read this: "But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." You see, he puts it both ways. Now, long since we have been familiar with the latter way of phrasing it—a thousand years is as one day. That is to say, the universal processes are leisurely and patient and we must wait the slow unfolding of the Creator's gradually evolving plans. But consider that other way of putting it which the writer uses: "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years." There are times when the meaning of a millennium is condensed into a single day. There are times when the course of centuries depends on what is done between sunrise and sunset. Crossing the Rubicon in an hour may carry with it the agelong destinies of empires. One day is as a thousand years.

The days of a man's life are not democratic. They do not believe in equality. There are monarchical days in which the issues of a lifetime are decided. Crisis is not abnormal. One day as a thousand years!

Critical Opportunities

Of course, this is obviously true in individual experience, so that one wonders how we ever came to be so bewitched by our modern preoccupation with smooth-rolled progressiveness as to forget the naturalness of crisis and need to be reminded of it by the crucial emergency in civilization now. For example, practical opportunity commonly does not stroll little by little into a man's life; it steps in. How swiftly some of our chances come, and when we are not ready, how precipitately they go! Dr. Norwood of the City Temple, London, is a man of international importance today but only a few years ago he was known only to a little group of his Australian friends. His chance came in ten minutes. In London during the war he had an opportunity to deliver a brief address. He tells me he put his whole soul into those ten minutes. It was a small hinge but on it swung the door to a worldwide opportunity.

Of course, that is true about life. Shakespeare is right—life is not smooth and quiet like an inland pond or an even flowing river:

> There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

Sometimes life is smooth, even, gradual, progressive, but at other times how dramatic, how precipitate, how suddenly it leaps on us from ambush, how like the earth's crust which, gradually sinking, comes at last to a headlong hour and in an earthquake shakes a continent!

Now, our forefathers understood this aspect of life better than we do. Doubtless they overemphasized it. Especially when they surrendered to apocalyptic forms of thought and expected the sudden coming of the Messiah on the clouds of heaven, they overdid it. But we have forgotten it altogether. We have been hypnotized by gradual progressiveness in a world where our fathers stared into the eyes of crisis. Aware of life's headlong precipitancy, they habitually spoke as Jesus did: "Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."

We, however, have gone so far to the opposite extreme that some among us would elide examinations from the school curriculum. Examinations, they say,

are crises and therefore abnormal and unnatural. I remain unconvinced. School life with periodic examinations is extraordinarily like the rest of life, with this one factor to make the school a far easier proposition: there at least one does have some idea when the examination will come. But in life one does not know. In life, amid ordinary days, suddenly up to a man's doorsill steps his opportunity and leaves him either advanced or flunked. One day as a thousand years!

Critical Decisions

Again, personal life is full, not only of critical opportunities but of critical decisions. No one who carefully reads biography would try to iron the days of a man's

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

life out flat. How often there is one day of which the rest are the fulfilment! In the last biography of Gibbon, author of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," we read: "His fourteenth [year] fixed his destiny. . . . He has chronicled the moment with affectionate recollection. 'I was immersed in the passage of the Goths over the Danube when the summons of the dinner bell reluctantly dragged me from my intellectual feast.' " So at fourteen the direction of Gibbon's whole future was determined, and in his elder years, in the last words he left the world, he described the fortunate man of genius as "one who should accomplish in the maturity of age the immortal work which he had conceived in the ardour of youth." Young man or woman here this morning, you cannot iron your days out flat. There are hours of decision now that are condensed lifetimes. One day as a thousand years!

Even when one is not young decision is critical. When Paul on the Damascus road was transformed from a persecutor of Christ to his loyal servant, he did not make that transition by gradual, inward reform but by precipitate inward revolution. Every once in a while I see that somebody has said that Paul was an epileptic, with the implied suggestion that that explains his sudden conversion. Now, that is very interesting. Some years ago in a play, popular in New York, this conversation occurred: "Did you not, then, consult a doctor?" "Yes," was the reply, "three doctors." "Did you not, then, get a diagnosis?" "Yes," was the reply, "three diagnoses." Certainly, when it is so difficult to get confident diagnoses of our obscure complaints even when we are alive, one marvels at the confident diagnosis of Paul's epilepsy nearly two thousand years ago. At any rate, if Paul was an epileptic, and he may have been, I notice that some say that Dostoyevski was an epileptic and Julius Caesar an epileptic and the Duke of Wellington an epileptic. Apparently epilepsy has been a familiar accompaniment of genius. But, my friends, epilepsy has never been the explanation of genius. Or if epilepsy does explain that amazing transformation in Paul's character, let us pray for an epidemic of it. No, what happened was that a man, long disquieted about himself, who from the day he watched the clothes of the persecutors' while they stoned Stephen to death, had never been contented with himself, who for months had been fighting against his own doubts about himself and trying desperately to flee the haunting and pursuing figure of the Christ, came to an hour of critical decision.

That is not ancient history. There are people here this morning in whose life the coming years depend on whether something like that happens in them. Do not dodge crisis. It is a normal part of real life. In different zones the dawn arrives in different ways. With us the morning gradually comes, slowly passes from dark through twilight into sunshine, but in the tropics morning is precipitate—

> . . . the dawn comes up like thunder outer China
> "crost the Bay."

O Eternal Spirit, bring the morning up like that in some soul here!

Critical Temptations

Again, personal life is filled, not simply with critical opportunities and decisions, but with critical temptations. Life would be a great deal simpler if our moral temptations had even the decency of rattlesnakes that sound a warning before they strike, but most temptations are not like that. They are not gradual. Remember those unforeseen, those unexpected hours, at ease, off guard, when like a foe from ambush a temptation precipitately leaped!

One of the most tragic experiences that a minister who deals intimately with individuals has to face is the staggered amazement of a man who has done a dreadful thing, when he faces the fact that he has done it. He never intended to do that. He never had supposed he could do that. He hardly can believe now that he has done that. Only, one day, his smooth life suggesting no disaster, suddenly upon his door an unforeseen temptation importunately knocked and he let it in. He never will escape the consequence. One day as a thousand years!

If some one says, Yes, but swift and cataclysmic as

that catastrophe was it was long in preparation, I say, Precisely; that is the point. The man had been careless, had relaxed his guard, had, like a tree, admitted to his pith and fiber secret decay. That is to say, he had run his life as though life were merely gradualness without crisis, so that when that storm, which he should have known would some day come, burst upon him, he went down—listen to Jesus—like "unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof." Alas for a man who tries to run his moral life without taking crisis into account!

Crises of Trouble

Of course, this is even more clear when we think of the moral strain involved in facing trouble. Man's troubles do not stroll gradually in. They do not announce their coming. They blow no trumpet before them in the street. Yesterday all was well, but today! Trouble does not flow like a stream; it flies like a bullet. Did someone come here this morning out of curiosity, let us say, feeling that, as for himself, he does not need the inward faiths, the profound resources of spiritual power which those who intimately know Christ have habitually found in him—"strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man"? My friend, I will believe that you do not need them only when I have a chance to watch you that day when your first great tragedy befalls. It takes roots, which cannot be extemporized, to stand sudden hurricanes.

We modernist preachers are continually told by our conservative brethren that because we have given up the old theology our preaching lacks critical urgency. Now, I do not think that the old theology by itself, even if I believed it, would make my preaching more urgent, but it is true that a great deal of our liberal preaching has been smooth, easy, soft, because it has neglected this aspect of life at which we now are looking and which our forefathers saw with terrific clarity and announced with compelling power. Life is full of sudden judgment days. They do come "as a thief in the night"—crises of opportunity, decision, temptation, trouble. And this is their common quality: when these judgment days arrive it is too late to get ready for them. A man either is ready or is not. He cannot get ready.

Jesus and Judas went up together to the tremendous strain of that last week in Jerusalem. Jesus was ready; Judas was not and he did a thing which so stunned him with amazement and shame when he woke up to find that he had done it that he went out and hanged himself. But neither Jesus nor Judas, when once that week was on them, could have gotten ready. Too late—a judgment day had dawned.

Here is a call for genuine preparedness. O my soul, "take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand."

History and Judgment Days

While so far we have been talking about this matter in terms of individual experience, it is obvious that the subject first was suggested by our social crisis. Look at the world today—catastrophic, volcanic—and how silly much of that talk sounds we used to hear about smooth, inevitable progress! In those halcyon mid-Victorian days even Herbert Spencer said: "Progress is not an accident, not a thing within human control, but a beneficent necessity." "This advancement is due to the working of a universal law. . . . Thus the ultimate development of the ideal man is logically certain . . . so surely must man become perfect." Well, take one look at the world and see whether so soft and easy a gospel about inevitable progress by gradual ascents, logically certain, fits the case. In days like these I turn from that fool's paradise to the Bible with a strong sense of its terrific but stimulating realism.

The Hebrews did not progress out of Egypt—they broke out. They did not progress into Palestine—they broke in. They did not progress out of national freedom into the conquering sovereignty of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome. Rather, like avalanches slowly accumulating their poised and imminent mass and then plunging headlong, one crisis after another befell the people. What is more, this experience of crisis wrought in the people an expectation of crisis, a moral preparedness for crisis, a courage in handling crisis which we desperately need today. They never had been told that mankind was on an escalator, willy-nilly being lifted to an ideal estate logically certain. They knew well that human history had been one judgment day after another.

Well, it is still, and all the noblest social gains mankind has ever won have been achieved, as democracy was achieved out of the French Revolution, by the intelligent and courageous handling of crisis. If we Christians had anything like the faith and spirit of our fathers, we would count it not an occasion of dismay but of stimulus that it is our opportunity to live again in a generation when one day is as a thousand years.

War Problem Challenges Today

It is *that* in matters like stopping war, for example. Millenniums may hang on what we do in our day. The situation today is critical. Mankind is more obviously on the brink of war than it was in 1914. Sometimes I wonder what you think in your secret hearts about war, the longer you have opportunity to study its history and regard its possibility. Most people, I perceive, think of war in terms of battlefields and trenches. Not I! Most often I think of war in terms of hospitals. There one sees war. So Walt Whitman said. I quote it to you although the language never was intended for a church: "They are hellish business, wars—all wars: Sherman said, War is hell: so it is: any honest man says so—hates war, fighting, bloodletting: I was in the midst of it all—saw war where war is worst—not on the battlefields, no—in the hospitals: there war is worst: there I mixed with it: and now I say, God damn the wars—all wars: God damn every war: God damn 'em! God damn 'em!" My friends, that is not swearing; that is prayer. And in determining whether that prayer is going to be answered, one day is as a thousand years.

Of course, as we all know, our economic situation is similarly critical. When one thinks what the plain people of this country want from their economic life,

it does seem a pity that they cannot have it. They want the privilege of falling in love and marrying with some security, and having children. They want comfortable roofs over their heads and warmth and enough to eat. They want open doors before their sons and daughters for education and worth while work. They want some pleasures that make life interesting. That is all they want from their economic life—some decent, peaceable chances to see a little of the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living before they die. And with our amazing capacity to produce even more goods than the people need, they could have these chances as well as not if we had put, or if we would now put, not temporarily but permanently, as much intelligence and energy into a planned economy for the welfare of all the people as we have put into an unplanned economy for private profit. But in deciding whether that shall be, one day now is as a thousand years.

You see where all this comes out in the end. It walks up to the doorsill of every man's soul. This kind of world is no place for cowards. A courageous sinner is more at home here than a timid saint. We were intended to deal with crises, sharpen our faith on them, make use of them. A great crisis is a great opportunity, but it takes faith and character to meet that challenge. "The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock."

A Religion of One's Own

By Charles W. Gilkey

WE do not as a rule look to the newspapers for our best contemporary poetry. The verse that appears there, whether it knows it or not, often seems to some of us to belong under the caption which a Chicago columnist regularly prefixes to one of his most delightful sections—"Dumbbell Pomes." But some months ago there appeared on the editorial page of one of the great New York dailies, over a name not unknown in contemporary anthologies, eight short lines that spring from such a genuine insight into human experience, and carry such a convincing sense of reality in our contemporary situation, that I cut them out to keep—only to find afterwards that further reflection on them led straight to this sermon. The little poem is entitled "Prayers," and its eight short lines run thus:

> My prayers were printed in a book—
> Smooth prayers, the paper fine,
> Morocco-bound, gilt-monogrammed,
> To show those prayers were mine!
>
> Scattered and torn things now, my prayers,
> Oft swept up on a moan,
> But I don't need a monogram
> To prove they are my own!

Now religion is not the only area of human experience in which that insight holds true. Most of us can still remember, whether it was last fall or long years ago, how it felt on the inside to go away from home for the first time. Homesickness, like seasickness, may seem funny to the onlookers: but to the victim it is certainly no joke. After the happiest of Christmas holidays at home last winter, a boarding-school girl was so homesick when she went back to school that she cried softly to herself through most of her first recitation; and her masculine instructor was hardhearted enough to ask her if she had brought back a very bad cold! Now that schoolgirl may have written some very fluent letters home that fall to assure her family how much she missed them; but there is a reality and sincerity about those furtive tears of hers, which everyone who has ever been homesick will at once understand, and which is more convincing than any words. "She doesn't need a monogram, to prove they are her own."

It is one of the oldest and most familiar of human observations that this same insight holds even truer of people when they fall genuinely and deeply in love. However fluent before that may have been our essays on friendship and our sonnets on love, or our discourses in public or private on sex or the new morality, something happens to our glib verbalisms when the real thing happens to us. Now we begin to stammer and hesitate—or become altogether inarticulate. One of the truest touches in Shakespeare's sonnets is that in which he contrasts the inarticulateness of his own deep affection, with the volubility of his more superficial rivals:

> My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still,
> . . . . . .
> I think good thoughts, whilst others write good words,
> And, like unletter'd clerk, still cry "Amen"
> To every hymn that able spirit affords,
> In polish'd form of well-refined pen.
> Hearing you prais'd, I say, " 'Tis so, 'tis true,"
> And to the most of praise add something more.

That "something more," beneath and beyond any words, is the hallmark of authentic experience that makes us sure the man knew what he was talking about. "He doesn't need a monogram, to prove they are his own."

Words and Realities

So it is most of all in religion. Inevitably most of us make our first and our most frequent contacts with religion through the medium of words. It comes to us all wrapped up in verbalisms—like a small but valuable Christmas gift done up in a succession of elaborate boxes and gay papers. The familiar words of scripture that we learned as children; the familiar phrases that the dear old saints repeated so often in prayer-meetings; the familiar sequences of the creed, the prayer-book, and the hymns we came to know by heart: these are the velvet-lined boxes, the bright paper, the red ribbons, in which the pearl of great price is given to us. And it is always easy for us, as for children who do not know the value of pearls that have become family heirlooms, to overestimate the value of these verbal wrappings, and to underestimate the treasure they contain. Like the writer of this little poem who learned through painful experience that the smooth-phrased prayers in a richly bound volume bearing her own monogram on the cover were not as valuable to her in a crisis as the broken outcry and awkward outreach of her own soul after God, we too discover sooner or later that the faith and hope and

love by which we live is much more important than the verbal forms in which we or others have previously expressed them.

These verbal expressions—to change the figure—are the vestibule of religion. Through them we may indeed enter (and find this entrance always open) into that inner shrine of wonder and joy, that paradox of self-abasement and exaltation and self-dedication, that every true lover and every deeply religious soul knows, but can never fully express. But once within that inner shrine, we begin to stammer, and then fall silent, with hearts too full for speech. We have felt the lift and power of

> . . . such a tide as moving seems asleep,
> Too full for sound and foam,
> When that which drew from out the boundless deep
> Turns again home.

Inner Shrines of Experience

In a time of spiritual perplexity and confusion like our own, when old terms need reexamination in the light of new knowledge, and living faith must have restatement in new terms that the younger generation can understand, there is great need for clarifying discussion of religion, and there is keen interest in it. And the only available implement for the discussion of religion is words. But we must always remember that the round table, the conference room, and the lecture hall in which this indispensable discussion goes forward, are inevitab'y located in the outer court of religion. Within the inner shrine of its deeper experience, as the Friends have helped us to understand, silence is more appropriate and adequate than any speech. For, as Mrs. Browning once pointed out, there come times when the only prayer the human soul can frame is the cry, "O God!"

Now there is a deep intuition in the heart of man that in the profounder relationships of affection and of religion, any experience that helps us to press through the showy wrappings to the discovery of the inconspicuous treasure within, that leads us through the babble of the vestibule to the silent rapture of the inner shrine, is worth all that it costs. Through the pains of homesickness we learn the meaning and the value of home.

> 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
> Than never to have loved at all.

One of the truest insights in that beautiful and sensitive story, "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," is that of Uncle Pico when he waits in hope that a genuine falling in love will lift all the acting of his protege Camila to a new level of creative power. It is one thing to talk and act glibly before the crowd in these matters: it is quite another to have knelt in solitary silence, and perhaps in inward agony, before the altar, and there to have found one's own heart kindled from its living flame. And that discovery, often costly, holds alike for the love of man and the love of God.

Making Religion Real

The experiences that lead us into this discovery are of various kinds, but they have in common the realization of the inadequacy of speech in the presence of the objects of our ultimate dependence and supreme devotion. The beauty or the majesty of nature often brings home to us that realization. A student who had shared in many discussions about the reality of God, and in the sense of uncertainty from which they sprang, told one of his teachers after a summer vacation about an experience that had settled the question for him. He had been riding late one afternoon down the eastern slope of a range in the Sierras; and as from the purple shadows around him he watched the rosy light climb and slowly fade upon the summits of the higher range to the east, there had come to him an assurance deeper than any words and more decisive than any arguments.

This is even truer when the conviction of the reality of religion and the goodness of God is mediated to us by

CHARLES W. GILKEY

persons on whom we have come to realize our dependence—in whom we have learned that we could build our trust. Just after the funeral of Charles R. Henderson, one of the most eminent of his colleagues said to me, "There lies the only man who has ever made religion real to me." The passing of two other greatly loved and trusted members of our own university community during the past year, one a faculty member and the other a faculty wife, has brought to many of their neighbors an experience as genuinely and deeply religious as is often given to a group like ours. The common conviction that there was and is more to their lives than words can state or explain, or than death itself can really get at, is part at least of the contemporary soil out of which a living faith in God can and does spring up and bear fruit.

Experiences like these help many of us to understand better what it is that Jesus Christ has done and is still doing for mankind. Not only for his contemporaries, but for all the generations since, he has incarnated certain convictions, perspective and attitudes that are to

this day best described by his name, into a life so winsome and quickening that men and generations who do not hold the same theories or explanations about him, are drawn together around him in the fellowship of a common loyalty and a common trust. Many who can no longer use the traditional theological formulas about him—"morocco-bound, gilt-monogrammed"—many of the younger generation especially to whom those formulas seem not so much untrue as unreal, can as yet find only "scattered and torn" words to declare their faith in him—but they "don't need a monogram" to prove that faith their own.

And if these experiences that take people beyond and beneath their fluent verbalisms into convictions that are often inarticulate just because they are personal and profound frequently prove painful and sometimes even tragic, there comes to steady and hearten us through them the deep intuition that at long last these experiences turn out to be worth all that they cost. Those who have found the traditional forms of faith in immortality breaking in their hands, at the same time that the living but inarticulate assurance of some ultimate victory of life and love over death was being reborn in their hearts, will understand the recent remark of a woman of great insight in a letter written shortly after her father's death—that there is "always some great revelation at such times."

Adversity and Religion

There is much discussion nowadays of the effects pro and con on religion of these hard times through which our generation is passing. How costly they are for all kinds of good causes, how painful for countless good people who do not deserve what they are suffering, how tragic they may prove for some of our fondest hopes, most of us by now know all too well. But there must be many who out of their own personal experience can vouch for the true insight of one of my former neighbors, once one of the well-to-do men of the community, who said the last time I saw him, "I've lost everything I once had—but at least I've discovered what my health is worth, and who my real friends are." And there must be many likewise who, out of their own religious experience through these years of acute anxiety and disappointment, can vouch for the truth of the second stanza of our little poem:

> Scattered and torn things now, my prayers,
> Oft swept up on a moan,
> But I don't need a monogram
> To prove they are my own!

Ours is not the first generation to discover that vital religion goes beneath and beyond the reach of words—even the right words! There is a strange old story in the nineteenth chapter of Acts about what happened at Ephesus to the seven sons of Sceva, when they tried to capture the secret of Paul's power to cure people possessed of evil spirits, by borrowing Paul's phrases at second hand. They thought that the only thing needed to secure results was the use of the right formula. "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." There was surely nothing the matter with that formula; it was orthodox enough to suit the most conservative either of heresy-hunters or of evil spirits, then or since. But when these men used it, it lacked one thing much more important in religion than either theological orthodoxy or intellectual accuracy: it lacked the authenticity and authority of personal experience on the part of those who borrowed it. When they used it, nothing happened—or rather, the unexpected happened. "The man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." Their borrowed formula lacked that "something more," without which religion in every generation becomes impotent and sterile.

Faith Too Deep for Words

There are two groups of people in the modern world who may well ponder the warning implicit in that old story—and explicit in our little poem. There are the militant orthodox, on the one hand, who insist on the use of the traditional formulae in theological thinking, and the traditional phrases in religious expression. Repeat the ancient creeds and texts, they say, and so cast out the modern evil spirits of skepticism and cynicism and despair. And on the other hand there are some intellectuals who think they can cast religion as an evil spirit out of the life of man with some very up-to-date formula that disposes of it altogether. It is nothing, they say, but "wishful thinking," or "compensation," or "escape"; or it is "the opiate of the people." Sophomores snatch up such a phrase from a classroom in psychology or sociology, or clever journalists broadcast it in the popular magazines, as if it completely disposed of the mysteries of the universe, or fully explained and therefore explains away the faiths and hopes and loves by which and for which men live. Kipling's "Tomlinson" forcibly reminds us that in these great matters borrowed formulae do not as a rule dig very far below the surface, whether used for attack or defense. Those who go about forever quoting other people's doubts and difficulties with religion as arguments against it, are as little likely to find the answers to their oft-repeated questions, as those who repeat the ancient creeds most insistently are unlikely to have sounded the depth and passion of their original faith. The deeper men go in religion, the less likely they are to find words with which to tell others all about it.

But if there is warning here for all those who put overmuch faith in formulae, and overestimate the power of words to comprehend realities, there is encouragement and promise for all those who live by and for faiths greater than they find themselves able to define or explain. There are many such in our time: present-day saints who find it difficult to speak in meeting and still more difficult to pray in public, who live religion daily but are alas neither original nor clever in its discussion; men and women whose love is utterly dependable, though they can never find words for its expression; religious folk whose faith overflows definition in its outpouring of devotion—who believe in a God greater and better than all their symbols for him, for reasons that can never be completely compressed into a syllogism. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"—for in that kingdom they do not spend all their time in talk, nor use up all their energies on words.

Jesus once compared that kingdom to a grain of mustard seed, "which indeed is the least of all seeds." What matters in that seed is not its bulk, but its vitality. So is it always in religion. What matters most is not its fluency, nor even its articulateness, but its genuineness and its power of development. Even if, in days as dark and difficult as these, your faith in man and in God seems no bigger than that mustard seed, don't worry about its size, and still less about how it sounds when you try to talk about it. Plant it in good soil—and it will grow.

My Most Awful Thought

By Bernard C. Clausen

And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons; and he suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him. And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him; and they found him, and say unto him, All are seeking thee. And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end come I forth. Mark 1:34-38.

I HAVE within recent months been obsessed by an awful thought—by far the most awful thought which has ever crossed my mind. You cannot appreciate the enormity of it unless you have traced sympathetically something of the general trend of my life.

I was brought up as a boy in a home where my parents enthusiastically loved Jesus. My mother prayed by my bedside. My father, a busy physician, was an ardent member of a church, and a Sunday school superintendent who refused to allow the demands of a heavy medical practice to interfere with his loyal faithfulness to his Christian task. All my life long, I have been taught to trust Jesus, and to cherish his truth. When the time came for me to decide what I was to do with my life, I sought to discover how I could best serve him. With a mind relieved and delighted, I found that, by the grace of God, I possessed in some degree the gift of speech which entitled me to be his advocate. I went to college and seminary, determined to sharpen up every edge of my life that might do duty for him, and ever since I have proclaimed him as my Lord and Master. Year after year, I have made public avowal of my allegiance to him.

Now, suddenly, there came an awful thought which cut away the foundations of that faith. It was not merely my professional livelihood which was threatened. It was the whole groundwork of my thinking. Everything that had become habitual to my mind during all these years seemed to reel in giddy ruin while I watched.

All through the years, while I was a happy disciple of Jesus, I have been conscious of criticisms that have come from one quarter or another, leveled at him. Some of the best men and women I knew were not at all impressed with Jesus, and were frankly disgusted with the church. But I have always been able to steady myself with the assumption that these people represented a sort of odd freakishness in their intellectual processes. They seemed like abnormal sports in the life of the mind, interesting if grotesque exceptions to the sound rule.

I cherished the knowledge that on the whole Christianity was gaining somewhat. The statistics showed that thousands of people were joining the churches every year. True, the numbers sometimes failed to keep pace with the growth in general population, but there were always enough converts to indicate a trend in the direction of Jesus. Missionaries reported whole tribes eager to be Christian. And as I looked out over the mission fields, I kept saying to myself: "There we have it. Wherever the gospel of Jesus is preached, all kinds of people can be found who are ready to be convinced by him!" If he did not seem to be winning the world with any speed or certainty, I could always explain that by remembering that these were times of unprecedented analysis, of brutal scientific attack, of difficult spiritual circumstances. And I was always able to say to myself: "No matter how interesting and confident these critics are, they do not know what is really going on. And they do not compare with the millions of people who are willing to call themselves Christians!"

"Varieties" of Christians

Then suddenly it dawned on me that all this evidence concerning the wide growth of the church might be turned into a terrible indictment of Jesus. Think what varieties of people call themselves Christians. The radio presents in vivid form the dazzling array—Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaux and his Negro congregation from the banks of the Potomac, Harry Emerson Fosdick at Riverside church, Judge Patterson and Father Coughlin, Aimee Semple McPherson and Frederick Shannon—all sending out their voices and their claims on behalf of Christianity to the ears of the world. Almost any kind of person, out of almost any kind of environment, following out any kind of philosophy, can feel at home in some Christian church today, without let or hindrance.

And churches themselves are of various "varieties." One congregation will live "rejoicing in the blessed hope" of Christ's sudden triumphant physical return, with armed power to wipe out his foes and establish on their smoking ruins his eternal kingdom. The worse things get, day by day, the surer they are of his coming. Another group will strive to assure his spiritual dominion by the kingdom's sure increase, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little, like the growth of wheat on the stalk, or the spread of yeast in the dough.

One church will demand that every member call Jesus the Son of God, and thrust forth his supernatural and inexplicable miracles as reasons for unwavering belief in his deity. Another group will cherish the title which he claimed for himself, Son of Man—will emphasize his oft-asserted brotherhood with all mankind as sons of God. To them his deeds of mercy were expressions of an unrestrained helpfulness, which leapt like a flame toward all human needs, and then fled before the ascription of miraculous power.

One church thinks of itself as an exclusive community of saved believers. Having said the prescribed creedal words, and performed the required ritual deeds, its members are secure in their right to admit only those who similarly conform. They dwell long and lovingly upon the words reported from the lips of Jesus, "He that is not with me is against me." But another church will find satisfaction in another quotation, even more fully attested, "He that is not against us, is on our part!" It is this attitude which dominates the now famous Laymen's Missionary report. We are sharers of the light. We want all the light that comes from other faiths, and we would impart to others all the light we have. And unless they rise up against us, we can cooperate with them.

BERNARD C. CLAUSEN

And all these people—and countless others of varying views of life and of religion—call themselves Christian. What they say is said in defense of what they call the Christian faith.

"All Things to All Men"

You can see now, I believe, how there crossed my mind, my "most awful thought." When I realized how many different kinds of people were members of the Christian church; how many types of thought bore the label of the cross; how many different lips repeat with varying intentions the words of Jesus, in contradictory efforts to prove opposite things, the terrifying idea crossed my mind. Even against the momentum of a lifelong devotion to him, I find myself saying: "Can it be that Jesus has collected his following because he said so many different things in so many different ways that almost anybody can find at least one thing with which he can agree! For anyone who agrees with one thing in Jesus' teaching will find welcome somewhere from some group as a brother Christian."

I wonder if I have made you feel the awfulness of that thought. It means, of course, that Jesus had exemplified the strategy of Paul—"All things to all men, in order to win some." Do you remember the day, early in his ministry, when he was besieged by throngs wanting to be helped or wanting to watch other people being helped? At night, while the crowds still milled around him—all favorably impressed, all voicing his praise, all agreeing with him completely so far—he went off into a mountain alone to pray. Soon the disciples followed him and interrupted his quiet with an insistent hint, "Master, all men seek after thee." Then it was that the awful thought rolled like a storm-cloud into his mind. He said: "Let us go into the next town, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth!"

Jesus' View of Success

It was this revelation of his obvious distaste for complete uncritical approval, his own realization that he was being strangled with undiscriminating agreement, which encouraged me, as I confronted my most awful thought. If I had detected him striding blithely through the scenes when all men spoke well of him, I might have supposed that he considered that success and courted it. But when I saw that this represented failure to him, and called for a fresh new start, I knew that he did not intend to curry favor by being all things to all men. I knew then that I could find some way out of my doubt if I were willing to think this thing through.

Out of my despair, as I fought with this most awful thought, came two conclusions which I hasten to share with you. For I would not have you believe that I am still in the doldrums of doubt. I have emerged from my mental experience with a happy confidence which you have a right to understand. And the two foundation pillars for that confidence can be expressed in a single succinct sentence, "Jesus was a patient teacher of difficult pupils." Not a bewildering mass of unexplained contradictions, not a clever, many-faced charlatan, flashing upon various occasions various attractive yet inconsistent ideas, but a patient teacher of difficult pupils.

Jesus wrote no book, built no institution, left no monument, recorded no saying in anything more substantial than the dust of the road. Whatever light his life shed has filtered down to us through the prisms of the human personalities that surrounded him. Their minds had been set by the molding of decades and centuries of tradition; their souls were haunted by ghosts of past fears and despairs; their hearts responded to emotions which were made up of poignant national and personal experiences; their customs of mental reaction had become ingrained and enslaving. They saw and heard not only with their eyes and ears, but with their expectations, their disappointments, their habits and their recollections.

Surrounded by people like that, Jesus had only three short years. No wonder he found himself driven on to a frenzy of activity; no wonder the days and nights were too short for him; no wonder he was sometimes

overwhelmed by the difficulty of the task and broken-hearted at the slowness of their minds. And he was compelled to pass on his truth to us through them!

Four Points of View in the Gospels

See what different points of view the four gospels represented. One was written with Jews in mind, by someone who was determined to prove that Jesus had fulfilled all prophecy. One was written with Romans in mind, by someone hoping to influence imperial citizens to respect the forthright achievements of a great spiritual conqueror. One was written with Greeks in mind, by someone who wanted to achieve a portrait full of symmetry and light and color and helpfulness. One was written with scholars in mind, by someone who wanted to express Jesus in terms of an understandable philosophic concept, with poetic glamour. These four Christians, trying hard to remember what they had seen and heard, or what others had told them, copied out their recollections as conscientiously as they could. But you have only to read their final lessons through, to discover what difficult pupils they were.

Watch them as they report, in opposite ways, what must have been a single plain intention on the part of Jesus. Matthew announces that once he said, "He that is not with me is against me." The exclusive, unequivocal decisiveness of this sentiment is evident. It is characteristic of the Hebraic messianic tradition, and we need not be surprised when we discover it in Matthew. But Luke and Mark report Jesus' statement in altogether different terms. To them he seemed to have said: "He that is not against us, is on our part!" It would be interesting enough to take the evidence before us and attempt to discover what Jesus really said. But it is sufficient for our purpose to discover what kind of people Jesus was teaching and entrusting with the transmission of his message. Here, as in other places, they were hearing with their expectations and preconceptions far more clearly than with their ears.

Various Views of the Kingdom

The same disagreements can be discovered in the passages dealing with the kingdom. Sometimes Jesus appears to be justifying the expectation of a sudden catastrophic triumph, like a thief in the night, with breath-taking completeness, like an army with banners. At other times, he seems to be quietly preparing his followers for the gradual development of a better life—by slow degrees, as a result of persistent effort—a light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. With these texts as evidence endless controversies ensue, unless we have the good sense to read the whole story again and again in all four gospels. Then it will appear, I think, that Jesus was carefully leading a group of reluctant minds away from ideas which had become fixed habits with them. He was changing their picturesque hopes of sudden justification into the slow deliberate steadiness which he knew must remake the world. And what seems in the record to be contrary to this desire of his is not to be taken as a revelation of contradiction in his thinking, but rather as an indication of the kind of thinking which surrounded him, which he was compelled to change by his teaching and which could not yield fast enough to receive in unadulaterated form his truth.

Toward those difficult scholars who could not fully understand him no matter how hard they tried and who in consequence were bound to misrepresent him to anybody who takes their reports phrase by phrase with literal exactness—toward these and toward others, Jesus was always the good and patient teacher. I found that I needed this second fact before I could banish my most awful thought. He was not content to be a magnificent orator—he strove to be an individual adviser. He took men, one by one, as he found them, and he proceeded to give them, one by one, what they needed.

If he found someone too exuberant and self-indulgent and uncontrolled, of course he prescribed soberness and a proper discipline based on a serious appraisal of life. But when he confronted others who in the name of their religion took pride in long faces and sanctimonious censoriousness, he mocked them with word and deed, and sent them away complaining that he was himself a glutton and a wine-bibber.

He found, around him, property-obsessed materialists who had no sense of the value of intangible realities. But there were also impractical dreamers and poets, who could not harness themselves to the mere housekeeping of life, who were guilty of foolish waste with their own resources, and who had to be taught the simple virtue of planned thrift and cannily-invested effort. To the one type he spoke of selling all, of starting out without purse or scrip, of taking no thought for the morrow. To the other type he told the parable of the talents, with all its sober insistence on business-like responsibility, and the sacredness of exact usury.

A Patient, Skilful Teacher

Yet he said all these different things without the slightest sense of inconsistency. He was no more inconsistent than the physician who refuses to depend upon a single patent medicine remedy, but prescribes what each case demands.

But here we must be warned against a grave possibility. When we find Jesus saying various things to various men because he observes differing weaknesses in them, we are always tempted to select for ourselves and take seriously the sayings with which we most readily agree. Yet these are precisely the sayings which we could afford to neglect. We do not grow by repeating the lessons we already know. Jesus would not find it necessary to insist upon the ideas we have already accepted. We must learn to cherish the sayings that hurt us, to study the teachings we do not understand, to obey the commandments that seem harsh to us, to invite the whiplashes of his rebuke, to gain from the discipline of his disagreements.

We must find in him not what we like, but what is good for us. We must select as our favorite chapters the ones that pain us most.

Then we can really understand him—a patient, skilful teacher, surrounded and interpreted by slow and difficult pupils. He is significant to us now, not because they passed him on so clearly, but because he was so clear that even their dullness could not wholly conceal him. Nor can ours, thank God!

Banished is my most awful thought. I suspect him no longer. With a shout of praise, I say again the words with which a poet hailed him:

If Jesus Christ is a Man,
And only a man—I say
That of all mankind, I cleave to him,
And to him will I cleave alway.

If Jesus Christ is a God
And the only God—I swear
I will follow him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air.

Service and Success

BY J. WHITCOMB BROUGHER

Whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your bondservant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28.

THESE words were spoken by Jesus in answer to the mother of the sons of Zebedee, who requested that James and John might have the privilege of sitting on the right hand and on the left hand of Jesus in his coming kingdom.

Luke tells us that this request raised a discussion among the apostles as to which one of them was accounted the greatest. It was during this dispute that Jesus and the twelve entered the upper room where they were to partake of the last supper. No one offered to perform the customary service of washing the feet. This was usually done by a servant. The disciples felt that they could not stoop to such menial service for fear that by so doing they would resign their claim to the title of being great. But Jesus himself performed that act of hospitality and courtesy.

Jesus not only taught the finest principles of living, but he lived them. He gave to his disciples the inspiration of his own example and further promised them the power of the Holy Spirit to enable them to practice the principles that he taught.

Marcus Dods calls attention to the fact that John introduces the story of the washing of the disciples' feet in language so sublime that it would seem to indicate that Jesus was about to perform one of the greatest miracles of his life.

You will find the story in the 13th chapter of John, where the writer sets forth six great facts concerning Jesus and implies that these were the motives which actuated the simple and yet significant example that Jesus gave his disciples when he washed the feet of the disciples.

Let us notice then

I—The Motives for the Act

First, Jesus acted *in view of his coming death.* "Jesus knew that his hour had come" (John 13:1). With the cross just in sight and death only twenty-four hours away he took time to teach the disciples that to serve was the pathway to greatness. We are not surprised at his forgiving his enemies and providing for his mother before he died, but we are amazed that one so great and marvelous as the Christ should take time just before his crucifixion to adjust the unworthy differences of his weak disciples. What would you have done under the circumstances? If you knew that tomorrow you were to die, what would you want to do by which to be remembered? Would you perform some selfish, sensational act, or would you seek to render some beautiful, unselfish service?

As Sam Jones with his family traveled home on the train from a great meeting in Oklahoma, he found a woman who was sick. She had three children with her. She had no money to get a pullman berth. He furnished the money and had the woman and children cared for. After they had been made comfortable for the night, he went to his own berth and went to sleep. The next morning his wife opened the curtains and found that he had gone home to be with the Lord. Sam Jones, within six hours of death, did what he was always doing—serving somebody in need.

The life of a Christian ought to be a daily round of helpfulness. Everyone with whom you come in contact should receive the encouragement of a pleasant smile, a hearty word of cheer, the handshake of sympathy, or some kindly deed of service.

When crossing the continent on the train, you never know when you cross the boundary line between two states. Your life should be so lived that you will realize no great change when you pass over the boundary line of death into the life beyond the grave.

Furthermore, Jesus acted *in response to an everlasting love.* "Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). Love overcomes all difficulties and ignores many a fault in order to serve the person loved. In spite of their narrowness and littleness, their selfishness and sinfulness, their jealousy and envy, Jesus loved his disciples with a constant devotion that led him to serve them continually. If they had not been sinners, they would not have needed his services. It was sin that brought Christ into the world. He saw in the sins and sorrows and mistakes of those about him, not a chance to criticize but a chance to serve. It is love that makes a mother forever gentle and kind and earnest in order to win the children away from their sinful follies and their ungrateful disobedience. Yes, "he loved them to the end." If they were lost here or hereafter to the enjoyment of that which was highest and holiest and best, it would be in spite of the fact that he loved them under all circumstances and conditions.

And Jesus acted *in view of treachery.* "The devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him" (John 13:2). Judas was there. A soul with a fine sense of honor is intensely aroused by the discovery of treachery. Can you forgive and forget the treachery of a friend who uses his intimate knowledge to betray you to your enemies? Jesus could do it. He did not unmask Judas before the rest, but knelt by his side and gently washed and dried his feet. If Judas could not be won by loving service, he would never be won at all.

Jesus had taught: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." He was now practising what he had preached. Most of us might be willing to wash our enemies' feet if we could use boiling water. Jesus was too great to allow any man to reduce his soul to the littleness of hatred and revenge. He never would "get even" with one who had wilfully wronged him.

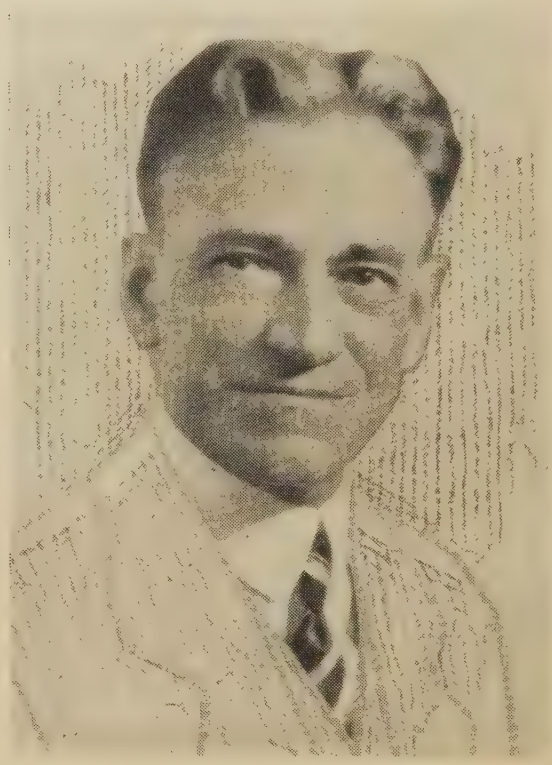
We are told that during the Revolutionary War a preacher walked fifty miles to beg General Washington to spare the life of a man who had been sentenced to death for neglect of duty. "I am sorry I cannot grant your request for your friend's pardon," said Washington. The preacher replied: "He is not my friend; I suppose I do not have a worse enemy living." Washington looked surprised and said, "Surely you are not pleading for your enemy?" "Yes!" said the preacher. "Then," said General Washington, "I will grant the pardon." The forgiving spirit of the minister so affected the man that he was transformed from an enemy to a friend.

And furthermore, Jesus acted *in the full consciousness of his power.* "Knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands" (John 13:3). The consciousness of great power usually asserts itself in a domineering spirit. But Jesus brought his mighty power to the humblest service he could give to man. Few men conscious of great physical, mental or financial strength are humble. Few women conscious of unusual beauty are numbered among the meek and lowly. People feel that others will discount their ability if they are willing to serve.

Jesus could say, "All authority in heaven and on earth belongs to me." The knowledge of that fact did not make him autocratic, but he brought his unlimited resources into the service of mankind. What a joy it must have been for him to be able to do anything he felt ought to be done for the good of humanity. To have power, to be conscious of ability and then to be humble enough to use it in all the little ministries in life where service can be rendered, is a grace greatly to be desired. General Grant incognito helped his men to lift logs and build a fort. A corporal stood around giving orders. When the work was finished, the general said to the corporal: "When you need help again, send for me."

And Jesus acted *in full consciousness of his dignity.* "Knowing that he came forth from God" (John 13:3). But there was no pride of ancestry in him. He was born "a gentleman" and lived the life of service. The pride of ancestry is sometimes as difficult to overcome as the pride of wealth. To be able to trace one's lineage back to some noble and famous person has been a great source of conceit and supercilious pride. Jesus rebuked this spirit when he told the Jews that their relation to Abraham did not necessarily make them true sons of Abraham. He could raise up more worthy sons from the stones if need be. There are times when it is not well to say too much about family trees—a lot of them need to be sprayed. Booker T. Washington once asked a white cab-driver to take him to the depot. The white man refused. Mr. Washington said: "If you will get inside and ride, I will drive the horse." The white man agreed and Booker T. Washington drove the horse and cab to the depot. He paid his money and went his way. Jesus, conscious that he was the Son of God, "made himself of no reputation and took upon himself the form of a servant" and did the work of a slave.

Finally, Jesus acted *in full consciousness of his destiny.* "Knowing that he goeth unto God" (John 13:3). His high and exalted destiny did not make him arrogant or indifferent to the service he could render his fellowmen. The story is related that Queen



J. Whitcomb Brougher

Victoria in her girlhood was spending a day with an aunt who entertained the child for a while and then said: "Victoria, have you anything you would like to do? Choose something and you shall do it, if it is possible." The little girl thought carefully for a moment and then said, "I want to wash windows." The aunt secured the pail and chamois skin, and the future queen of Great Britain and empress of India scrubbed away to her heart's content.

It is the spirit in which service is rendered that marks its value. This is true of all labor. It is the menial spirit that makes the menial, and not the kind of work one does. A noble motive dignifies the work one does, while an ignoble motive makes it servile.

And now let us consider

II—The Meaning of This Act

Any act performed under the inspiration of these marvelous motives might well have unusual significance. Any deed corresponding to these motives would be of supreme merit.

First, it showed *the value of hospitality and courtesy.* To wash the feet in that age was as much an act of hospitality and courtesy as to give today to the guest who enters your home the opportunity of washing the dust or dirt from his hands. Jesus on one occasion reproved a Pharisee who had invited him to dinner, because he failed to offer him this courtesy. Jesus was ever teaching the disciples that one of the graces of the Christian life is the kind thoughtfulness which expresses itself in consideration for the comfort of others.

A father said to his son: "Treat everybody with consideration, even those who are rude to you; for you are to show courtesy to others not because they are gentlemen, but because you are one." Courtesy does not cost much, but it yields the biggest returns. It is the very essence of service.

And it showed also *the humility of greatness and the greatness of humility.* True greatness is always humble. The lack of humility on the part of anyone displays a sense of weakness somewhere. Self-conceit is always an attempt to overcome conscious weakness. True greatness can be humble without loss of power or dignity. Jesus stooped to conquer. The extreme simplicity of Christ's conduct is as difficult to follow as is the greatness of his character. How simply, and how beautifully, does the character of Jesus shine out in all the splendor of his humble service to mankind. After eight years as President of the United States, James Madison retired to his Virginia plantation and filled the office of justice of the peace. Real greatness rejoices in the privilege of doing little things for the good of others.

Jesus' act showed too *the supreme importance of service.* He declares that it is the secret of success and the only medium of greatness. "Whosoever would be great among you shall be your servant; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your bond slave."

The life of Jesus is summed up in the words, "He went about doing good." To see the opportunities for helpful service, and to take advantage of them is a divine gift. The "boy scout" principle is worthy of emphasis here: "Do some kind act of service every day without thought of reward." To do this is to practise the Golden Rule.

III—The Method of its Imitation

Jesus said to his disciples: "I have given you an example that ye also should do as I have done to you." Jesus gave to his followers for all time an example of humble service.

First, it is to be *imitated, not spiritualized.* We are not to dodge the real meaning of this act by "evaporizing" it into some sort of spiritual fog that will becloud the atmosphere and hide the practical task that needs to be done. It is so easy for us to express our sympathy in well-wishes, and at the same time fail to perform the helpful deed.

Further, Jesus' act of service is to be *imitated, not ceremonialized.* Jesus did not pose as the champion foot-washer of the world. He did not give us an example of foot-washing; he gave us an example of thoughtful, kindly, helpful service. This act was never intended to become an ordinance of the church. To go through the ceremonial, once a year, of washing the feet of twelve paupers who are picked out and carefully prepared, is not to follow the example of Jesus. It is not a ceremony; it is a service.

And, again, his act is to be *imitated, not mimicked.* Taking off shoes and socks and washing one another's feet might be aping Christ, but it would not be practising his example. When the teacher of mathematics gave me an "example" to solve, it was composed of a combination of figures and I had to find the answer. The basin of water, the towel, the disciples' feet needing to be washed, and Jesus washing them—these are the figures in this example. The answer is: "Christianity is a life to be lived. It is not simply a message to be heard; it is a deed to be done. The inevitable expression of real Christianity is a life of sacrificial service."

All about us are men and women, boys and girls who are undernourished, underprivileged, handicapped by poverty, ignorance, sickness and sin. We need to feel deeply their physical, moral and spiritual desolation, and minister to their needs. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

United Churches in a Divided World

By Albert W. Beaven

Is Christ divided?—What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed.—I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.—Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that . . . there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same judgment. I Corinthians 1:13; 3:5, 6; 1:10.

Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand. Leviticus 26:8.

THESE verses of scripture, from different parts of the Bible, are nevertheless bound together for us today by the relationship to the topic we have chosen. They bear upon the theme, "United Churches in a Divided World." In these texts are clearly set out, first: the essential oneness of those who follow Jesus Christ; second: the danger of factions among them; and third, the value of cooperation and its power of accomplishment.

We who are lovers of the Christian church cannot avoid realizing today the terrific task which is before us if we are to make the purposes of our Lord and Master regnant in our confused and distracted modern life. We cannot avoid, either, the sobering consciousness of the seeming inability of the church of Jesus Christ to make such a contribution to the solution of these as we feel sure she can and should make. Nor, in the third place, can we ignore the flat statements made by our enemies that we cannot and will not meet our opportunities nor adjust to serve the needs of this time. In the light of

these facts may we think over some of the underlying principles that bear upon this theme.

The Problem of Human Relationship

There is no question that the problem of human relationship is one of the most difficult that we have to solve. We seem to be able to get along with matter, with earth and air, with electricity and steam, far better than we can with one another. Scientists and engineers who can solve the problems of man's relationship with the universe or his control over the elements, cannot solve their own relationship to their fellowmen, nor learn the method of control even in their own families. The art of human relationship is one which we seem dismally slow to learn.

There can be no question, either, that the greatest values in life are dependent upon the proper solving of this problem. When a person lives in right relationship with his fellowmen, in his home and with his neighbors; when he experiences the meanings that are included in those words: friendship, love, neighbor, he is on the way to a life full of value and satisfaction. But let that relationship be disturbed; let hate come instead of love; let distrust, suspicion, jealousy, enmity, come in, so that between him and others the relations are broken off, or twisted, or distorted, so that he becomes isolated, then immediately life becomes increasingly impoverished, distasteful and valueless. Love signifies a full life; isolation signifies an empty life.

Everyone who studies the teachings of Jesus Christ must be impressed with the number of things he said which bear upon this problem. In response to one who questioned him as to the first and great commandment, he taught that this central demand was not a single but a double imperative: the first, which called for right relationship with God, and the second, right relationship with our fellowmen. At heart these two were one, he said; they could not be separated. Elsewhere we are taught that the hope of establishing right relationship with our fellowmen is dependent upon our establishing right relationships with God.

Jesus' placing of love as the central motive in life, his emphasis on friendship between himself and his followers, between one Christian and another, his teaching in the "golden rule," the laws of life illustrated in the parables, such as those of the Good Samaritan, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Good Shepherd and the Prodigal Son, are but indications that the Christian religion places right relationship with our fellowmen as cardinal in life, and makes its proposals to help us solve that problem correctly.

Competition and Cooperation

There are two great attitudes that individuals can take toward others. The first is competitive, the second is cooperative. In the first, the individual looks upon other persons as competitors with him; he is to get from them all he can, and get it first; they are his rivals. If he is smart, he will beat them and get more than they can. When he carries this spirit to its limit he is their exploiter, and history gives example after example of men who have incarnated this attitude. It is essentially a non-Christian, or pagan attitude.

Over against this spirit is that of the cooperator. He looks upon his fellowmen not as those whom he is to exploit. He does not take the attitude of the "princes of the gentiles" of whom Jesus spoke, who considered it their prerogative to exercise authority over the others. The cooperator looks upon others as his fellow-workers.

Not only is this Christian, but it is common sense. In the verse quoted from Leviticus it should be noted that the promise which stated that five should chase a hundred, also stated that a hundred should chase ten thousand. In other words, if instead of securing the cooperation of five they secured the cooperation of a

Albert W. Beaven

hundred, they had increased the proportion of their efficiency five times over. And this is a law of life.

The value of this sort of team work is proved every day, in the home, in athletic contests, in a business organization, within a government, and anywhere where it is honestly tried. Cooperation is good common sense, as well as good religion. Competition, however attractive it may seem to be at the beginning, is in the end foolish and wasteful. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death." I remember hearing a few years ago an illustration used by a speaker at the Chautauqua assembly. I do not recall his name, but I have never forgotten the contrast which he drew. It was between the lion and the lamb. Said he: "There are those who believe that the man who looks out for number one, who gets what he wants regardless of others, is in line with the law of the 'survival of the fittest'; he will live on, while others will pass." But let us take that principle, said he, into the realm of the animal world. The lion is probably the exemplification of that principle. He has the longest claws, and the sharpest teeth; he does not run in a

herd, he plays a lone hand. He is the strongest fighter, he can kill any other animal, but he will not work with nor help other beasts. At the opposite extreme in the animal kingdom we might put the lamb. He can do very little to hurt anyone else. He cannot kick, cannot fight, cannot strike. About all he can do is to serve others by growing wool to keep them warm, or mutton chops to feed them. He can serve; he will not hurt. The lion will not serve, and he will destroy. If the idea of the survival of the fittest were the larger principle, then the lions ought to cover the earth, and the lambs ought to be as extinct as the dodo. The fact is that the contrary is true. You cannot find a lion unless you go to Africa; you can find lambs on every hillside; because there is a deeper principle than the survival of the fittest, namely, that when an animal proves that it will not serve, but will destroy, all unite to exterminate it; whereas, when even an animal proves that it will serve and will not hurt, all unite to protect it.

How Competition Wrecks Society

Slowly we are working out this same idea to a realization in society. Here in our country we have well nigh worshiped the principle of competition in business. As James Truslow Adams has pointed out, it seems to have been the one principle that we were willing to trust; we felt that if it was given free hand it would solve our problems. It was turned loose, and it has well nigh wrecked society. It has proved again that its ways are ways of death. And now, theoretically at least, we acknowledge this and are attempting to substitute for unlimited competition some form of cooperation, or planned economy.

All of these various truths which we have emphasized focus the spotlight upon the problem which the church faces. In a time when evil is rampant, when our people are crushed under burdens that are almost impossible to carry, when their morale is low, when the task of promoting a better world needs so tremendously to have all those who believe in it able to work efficiently to secure its accomplishment, we find ourselves split up into groups, each group pretty much making its own plan, inclined to emphasize the set of ideas which differentiate it from others, rather than the concepts which are common to all; priding itself upon its independence, and only lately trying to learn the art of cooperation with other groups.

So far, indeed, has the spirit of competition between these groups carried us that in city after city across the country there stand monuments of our folly. In towns that might need two churches we have put six. Money contributed to advance the kingdom of God we have frequently used merely to advance denominational prestige. In planting our churches we have frequently asked, not, "Does the community need it?" "Does the kingdom of God demand it?" but, "Is our denomination getting its fair recognition in this town, or are we lagging behind others?"

In recent years, our consciousness of the folly and the danger of this has been borne in upon us. Certainly it is time for us to rethink this whole situation and our relationship to it. We need to ask again, as Paul demanded of the Corinthians, "Is Christ divided?" "Is the kind of competitive relationship that we have today necessary? Is it consonant with the spirit of Jesus? Has the Christian movement a fair chance when it is handicapped by that condition? Is it not possible for us to find a far better way than we now have?"

What About Denominations?

I submit that there are tremendous values in the liberty of religious thought which produced Protestantism. I believe in the right of people to worship according to the dictates of their own conscience, in their right to form groups to protest against uniformity and to promulgate convictions which they feel to be essential, in the right of free inquiry, and of voluntary association as the result of that inquiry. These values I am sure must be preserved. I refuse to believe that forcing everybody into one group and calling upon them to recite one creed would bring in the millennium. Neither do I think that one big church is indicated, either by common sense, by history, or by the situation. While I think that the movement for consolidation between denominations probably could go, and should go, a long way beyond where it has now gone, I do not, personally, expect to live to see the time when all Protestant denominations will be one, nor do I agree that that would be either wise or necessary.

But having said that, I state my conviction that we can conserve the values which are inherent in our independence and our free thought and approach to truth, and at the same time can develop both the method and the spirit of cooperation to the place where we can eliminate most of the present wastage, and can guarantee a far greater degree of efficiency than we now have.

Agencies of Coordination

In addition to the plans that are made for any one church, for any one denomination, locally or nationally, there can and must be the great agencies of coordination, which face the whole task and plan for all the friends of the Christ, as each group takes up its sector of the front line in the advance. The agencies of interdenominational cooperation and planning must be developed and trusted much further than they are now; they must become more completely the agencies through which we arrive at our plan. The strategy of advance should be the strategy agreed upon by all. Where there is a new field to be entered, plans should be made in a united fashion, the work divided, and the tasks assigned. Where, because of the previous use of the competitive attitude we have overstaffed or overchurched areas, we ought to face it fearlessly and fairly, and change the situation. If and where our home mission moneys are used to finance competitive organizations, we should learn the facts, eliminate the condition, and cooperatively attempt to do the thing that is needed for the cause of the kingdom at that spot.

In the world war, each one of the allies made its own plans, fought separately, and was whipped by Germany. But when we added to the same armies the strategic values of a unified plan and a unified method of approach, then victory instead of defeat came to us.

The real enemies that are against any one of us are against us all. The real factors and powers that are

friendly to any of us are friendly to all of us. We have everything to lose by playing a single hand; we have everything to gain by thinking together.

Every argument for this which has existed heretofore is doubled today. There is in the nation a new distrust of competition, a new and almost pathetic seeking for the values of cooperation. The stage is set in America for a new advance in cooperation in all religious bodies.

But if there are things here that conduce to it, there are things in the world that make it imperative. Over against our tendency to stress cooperation inside the nation, is an ever increasing tendency to distrust cooperation between nations. Economic and political national isolation seems before us. Down that trail lies peril and danger, if not destruction. Into the midst of this divided world the church ought to be able to come with a united message. Christ is not divided; we who follow him should be able not only to sing "all one body we," but to act more nearly as though it were true, else the warning of the ancient apostle will grow increasingly appropriate for our generation when he said, "I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that . . . there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same judgment."

Enduring Hardships

BY HAROLD C. PHILLIPS

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. II Timothy 2:3.

THE man who wrote these words was in prison. It was not his first visit! Let him tell us in his own words some of the hardships through which he had been passing. He writes: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep"—hanging, perchance, to a broken spar. And he goes on to enumerate similar experiences.

Paul must have been a man of unusual physical vitality. Once at Lystra he was stoned. They "dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead." But the next day the apostle turned up at Derbe, thirty miles away, preaching as though nothing had happened. He must have been a sorry looking apostle! I share the sentiment of one of my friends, who said that he wished some of the stuff that was in Paul could be made into a serum and injected into him.

And now he is once more in prison, this time awaiting martyrdom. He writes to this young man whom he dearly loves, Timothy, whose mother was a Jew, his father a Greek. And what does he say as he writes to him? Does he say, "Timothy, I have had a hard time of it. I sincerely hope you will find life much easier than I have found it?" No. He does not say that. Rather he writes: "Timothy, take your share of the hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

You know, my friends, such a message does something to you. It's a tonic. When General Armstrong, whom Professor Peabody refers to as perhaps the most inspiring leader of men in our generation, was first undertaking his work for the Negroes in Virginia, he wrote the following letter to a friend in the north: "Dear Miss Ludlow: If you care to sail into a good hearty battle, where there is no scratching and pin-pricking, but great guns and heavy shot only used, come here. If you like to lend a hand when a good cause is shorthanded, come here." Brave souls respond to appeals like that.

Courage Under Hard Blows

Now notice, first of all, that there is nothing we so admire in other people as their courage in standing up heroically under those very blows which we all try to avoid. What I mean is this: None of us wants a "thorn in the flesh," but when we see another mastering the thorn, we instinctively feel like taking off our hats to him. Two ships sail into port from different directions. One of them had fair sailing, blue skies above and placid waters below. The other comes in somewhat battered. Massive waves smashed her superstructure. Storms delayed and damaged her. But she comes in. Somehow one feels that if a prize were to be given to one of those captains, we would instinctively give it to the one whose voyage was most difficult and dangerous. We do not pin medals on the breasts of the ease-loving. In the background there is always some opposition, which the recipient of our praise, through his mettle, has outwitted, and through his courage has conquered. Yes, none of us likes hardships. And yet this cross, which we all try to avoid, is the very thing which elicits our deepest admiration when borne by some other in triumph. As William James writes, "On the scene of the world, heroism, heroism alone, plays the great parts. In heroism . . . lies hidden the mystery of life."

Now the truth of the matter seems to be that for most of us today the question is not, "Shall I endure hardship?" but rather, "*How* shall I endure it?" Not so long ago many of us had a choice. But not now. There are not many people today walking the path of ease. If there are such people I don't think they would care to advertise the fact. The burden of life rests very heavily upon us all. Someone said recently that the most burdened people today are probably those "who have enjoyed comfort, luxury, power and position, but now find their circumstances so radically altered that life as they have familiarly lived it is no longer possible."

And the truth of the matter is that a lot of people are breaking under the strain. The suicide rate in our country has doubled since 1918, and has, of course, steadily increased during the past two or three years. Our wells are going dry, and we are discovering that we have no inner reserve, no "living water springing up." The props upon which we leaned are breaking, and our spinal column, so long out of use, cannot hold us up. Long ago Marcus Aurelius, a pagan, said: "Man must be arched and buttressed from within, else the temple wavers to the dust."

How Endure?

Now let us be a little more specific. This man Paul, writing from his Roman prison, does not merely tell

us to endure hardships. He tells us how to endure them—"as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." What does that mean?

I wonder if the very first thing that a good soldier of Jesus Christ will do is not this: look those hardships squarely in the face. Paul was in prison and he knew it. He never for a moment imagined he was anywhere else. It was a hard fact. He faced it.

I may be wrong, but I have the feeling that there has been a tendency to cover up these facts today. We are something like the old woman who, when she first heard of the theory of evolution, remarked: "Let us hope that it is not true, but if it is, then let us by all means proceed to hush it up!" Many arguments, for example, were used in effecting the return of legalized liquor. One of them was particularly revealing. It came from the pen of an able writer, Mr. Walter Lippmann. We had been told that beer would "balance the budget." But this writer went further. His argument was not only economic, but humanitarian. "Beer," he wrote, "would be a great help in fighting off the mental depression which affects great multitudes who are bored and discouraged, and it is an unnecessary cruelty to withhold it. . . . Beer is . . . consoling and warming and it should be made available as soon as possible."

But it did not take Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison very long to put a rapier thrust through that argument. This is how Dr. Morrison interprets Mr. Lippmann's words: "Fill up the unemployed with beer, it drives away the blues! To keep men from realizing the bitter truth as to the tragedy which has befallen them, let them get—and stay—pleasantly befuddled! Protect society against having to pay for its own sins by inveigling its victims into an alcoholic indifference! Let beer be the opiate of the people." Of course, Mr. Lippmann's argument in behalf of beer is not entirely unlike the argument that David Harum used in behalf of fleas. He said, you remember, that it was a very good thing for a dog to have fleas, because they kept him from brooding too much over the fact that he was a dog!

"As Good Soldiers"

Religion, however, is not an opiate, nor is it a counter-irritant. It insists that we face these realities as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. No soldier, when he faces the enemy, ever pretends that the enemy is not there. Nobody ever gets out of a condition until he first of all realizes the condition he is in. It does not help us to treat a tumor as if it were a boil, cover it with a poultice, when what it needs is a knife! Millions of Americans today have made heroes of those who dispense sentimental twaddle. But if a burglar is in the house it is not the part of wisdom to be crooned to sleep with a lullaby! "Ephraim feedeth on wind." There is always a lot of wind, but wind is poor diet.

No, we cannot drown this thing with beer, nor croon it away with jazz. If our car will not run, it does not help matters to put a fresh coat of paint on the hood. A sick patient in a hospital quite often wears a rosy complexion, but the application of cosmetics is not evidence

A Pastoral Prayer

By Clarence A. Barbour

WE come to Thee, our Father, at the opening of this new stage in life's journey. The year now closing has brought its mingled experiences of joy and sorrow. We have no wish to retrace some parts of the way, yet in it all Thy care for us has not failed nor faltered. We have not always been constant toward Thee. We confess it with shame and sorrow. Our prayer is that unfailing communion with Thee may characterize the New Year, impelling to steadily ministering service toward our fellowmen.

We pray Thee for the churches in these trying days, when difficulties of new kinds and unparalleled magnitude are in the way. May we walk in faith and hope and love.

Give us humble faith in our own capacity for service and in the integrity of our inmost purpose. Give us ennobling faith in our fellows, those who make the pilgrimage of life along the same roads which we travel, some of them bearing burdens of which we do not know. Patiently and gently may we journey in helpful comradeship.

Give us, above all, abounding faith in Thee. Thou art not weary or discouraged. Thy Kingdom is to come in full measure, though our eyes may not see that coming in its full accomplishment.

Grant us a hope, never dying and never growing dim. So may we be centers of good cheer, of inspiration and of strength. Amid voices of the prophecy of evil, voices that dishearten and make afraid, may ours be of another meaning, not in blind ignorance, not in shallow optimism, but in harmony with the purpose and power of our God.

Fill us with the love of God and the love of men which shall help toward the only possible solution of the tangled life in the midst of which we walk, the permeation of our civilization by the Spirit of the loving and ministering Master whom we try to serve.

We pray Thee for the young, who have received so mingled a heritage from those who have gone before them. May they help to point the way toward a better and a nobler day.

Bless our beloved country, its Leader and those sharing with him the burdens and problems of the time. May the way be made clear toward the welfare of our own people and the people of every nation about the circle of the globe.

We lift up our hearts to Thee. Amen.

of restored health. "Get to the root of the trouble," says religion.

It is for this reason that many of us see spiritual significance in the principles that underlie the National Recovery administration. This *is* an attempt to be realistic. General Johnson said recently: "It has become daily more certain that the jungle law of survival by economic mayhem and murder must be amended." Such an amendment, however, to the *human* constitution will not be easily effected. This is why all ethical schemes need the undergirding of religion. "Change your heart and not your garments," said the prophet. "Change your mind," said John the Baptist. Jesus taught that the real changes were from within. He would not put new cloth into the old garment. He was not reassured by a society that only *outwardly* appeared beautiful. He said it was like a whited sepulcher. "What comes out of a man," said he, "is what defiles him. From within, from the heart of man proceed evil purposes. . . ."

My thought goes back to that first century world to which he brought this message. I see the Roman with his power; the Pharisee with his pride; the sophisticated Greek, like those Paul met at Athens, playing with his philosophies. But there was one man in that world who was getting to the root of things. With a clear head and a courageous heart he saw what the real causes of human suffering and tragedy were. He saw human selfishness, greed, racial and national bigotry in all their reality. He would not gloss them over. He came to grips with them. One night, in a garden, beneath the silent stars, he took the cup. He faced the situation. As one thinks of the sinister forces that have been destroying our life, one fears for the success of any scheme of social betterment until what is written on paper is written on our hearts. "For God has done what the law . . . could not do; by sending his son. . . ." If the new birth is fiction, the new world will not be fact.

Converting Hardships Into Triumphs

There is something else that is involved in enduring hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Religion not only says, "Face it"; it has the audacity to say, "Use it." Religion tells us that the blows that fall upon us in life need not crush us, but may fashion us. It gives us the strength "to grasp life's nettle." Religion tells us that our trials can be converted into triumphs, our millstones into stepping stones. It transforms weights into wings.

There are two ways in which it helps us to do this very thing. First, it suggests that we use our hardships by *learning* from them. Of Jesus it was written, "He learned obedience by the things which he suffered." Some of life's greatest lessons are learned in the school of hard knocks. A cynic has said, "Men's lives consist mostly in making the same mistake over and over again." Shall we have to plead guilty to this accusation? What can we learn from our hardships?

Recently somebody in Cleveland wrote to one of our newspaper columnists. He had seen these words on a bill board: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." He told the columnist he could not make head or tail of those words and asked him to explain. The columnist replied that in everyday language he thought the words meant this: "Don't kid yourself; you can't make a fool of the Almighty!"

Some people today, because of the condition of modern life, have lost faith in God. On the contrary, our faith in God ought to be increased. If we could go

Harold C. Phillips

through such a thing as the world war, with its untold beastliness, its unspeakable waste of money and human life, and "get away with it," then I would begin to lose faith in God, and in the moral integrity of the universe. But not so. We do reap what we sow. "We cannot break the laws of God." We can "break ourselves against them." Shall we make the same mistake over again?

Many writers during the post-war period, strangely enough, have been preaching persistently the gospel of our moral irresponsibility. Through screen and stage and novel the theme is reiterated, "There is no right or wrong. Just do as you please." They have put a halo around the head of debauchery and moral turpitude. "Let us eat, drink and be merry." Is it not time we woke up and moved out of that fool's paradise? This is a moral universe. Even nature has a moral code. We cannot sow weeds and reap fruits. Some of these very men who, in spite of history and of the experiences of modern life, have been luring us by the bait of moral irresponsibility, are the first ones to turn up their noses at religion as being an "escape from reality." What nerve! If we are wise we shall

learn that "our economic damnation is the price of ethical transgression."

Learning From Hardships

There is another way in which religion tells us we can use our hardships. Learn from them? Yes, but more than that, assume a positive attitude towards them. In very truth, "take up arms against a sea of troubles." Carlyle, you know, once wrote: "Here on earth we are soldiers, fighting in a foreign land . . . let us do it like soldiers, with submission, with courage and with heroic joy." I would be tempted to question one word in that beautiful sentence, and that would be the word "submission." Religion inspires us to something more than submission. Let us illustrate.

The story is told of Josephine Butler. She came home late one night and her only child, a little girl, excitedly rushed out of her bedroom upstairs to greet her mother, who stood at the foot of the stairs. In her eagerness she fell over the baluster at her mother's feet and was taken up dead! What did that mother do with that hardship? Well, there are many things she might have done. That grief might have closed for her all the windows of life. It might have pulled down all the shades, and life for her might have become forever a darkened room. She might have become cynical and embittered, or even have been driven to despair.

But she chose another way. She endured this as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. She took this hardship and used it, by adopting a positive attitude toward it. She went out to mother thousands of little orphan girls, who otherwise would have known nothing of a mother's love.

> Because of little pallid lips which once
> My name did call,
> No childish voice in vain appeal upon
> My ears doth fall.
> I count it all my joy their joys to share,
> And sorrows small.
> Because of little death-cold feet, for earth's
> rough roads unmeet,
> I'd journey leagues to save from sin and harm
> Such little feet;
> And count the lowliest service done for them
> So sacred sweet.

Blessed are those souls who through tribulation reach such glory. There are many Josephine Butlers in the world today. Each heart knoweth its own bitterness. Many hopes are broken. The trellises to which our lives have clung are fallen. Disappointments, dark clouds of apprehension and uncertainty hover in our sky. But to these hardships religion urges a positive attitude. Use them. Make them ladders to the light.

Toward a Promised Land

Now one wonders whether that same attitude does not hold for our social as well as personal ills. It did in the experience of the early Christians. They did not act as if they were "mice caught in a trap." The hardships they endured were rather like paths laboriously cut through a wilderness, but leading to a better country. They would never have tolerated this modern chatter about "unyielding despair," which is, I think, merely self-pity with a very thin veneer of heroism. Their slogan was rather victorious faith. In the wilderness, yes, and *through* the wilderness to a promised land. In the darkness, yes, but through darkness to light.

My friends, I think this attitude supremely important. These men turned their hardships to a noble purpose. They did not just meekly submit to the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." Whenever they suffered, through their suffering something socially constructive and creative was realized. Paul endured hardship. But with what result? Christianity was severed from the apron-strings of Judaism, and was set free to go forth and conquer the Roman empire. St. Francis endured hardship. But what happened? The whole inner life of the church was cleansed. David Livingstone in Africa suffered tragedies which seem almost too much for flesh and blood, and yet today what happened *to* him is transfigured in the light of what happened *because* of him. A continent opened, and the neck of African slavery was broken. Jesus went to a cross, but in such a spirit and for such a purpose that that darkest of deeds is today the source of eternal light and life.

Would it not be a glorious thing if future generations writing of us should say something like this: "Back in the early twentieth century people suffered great hardships. Many of them lost their lifelong savings. Millions walked the streets, demoralized and destitute. Other millions whose homes were mortgaged had to give them up. Families were evicted. Homes were broken. But they did not just blindly submit to those hardships. They used them creatively. They discovered a new sense of values. They laid the foundations of that better world in which we are now living. Our more Christian economic order we owe to them."

Well, that's what might happen had we the wisdom and the faith to endure hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Our Roman prison might become the gateway to a better world, and a more abundant life.

The Baptist Number

The ministers whose sermons appear in this issue were selected, not by the Editor of The Pulpit, but by a vote of the more than 6000 ministers of the Northern Baptist Convention, who were asked to name, by ballot, the seven preachers whom they would like to have represent their denomination in this special Baptist Number. The Christian Century Pulpit honors itself in extending its hospitality to these great preachers whom their brethren have delighted thus to honor. Announcement of the Congregational-Christian Number will be made in an early issue, with other denominational numbers to follow.

The Minister's Inner Growth

By Frank Fitt

EIGHTY years ago Robert W. Dale, aged only twenty-four, became co-pastor with John Angell James at Carr's Lane chapel, Birmingham. The older man was in the closing years of a long and fruitful ministry in that chapel and the younger man had been taken on as one who gave promise of having the power and brilliance to succeed him. Some of the parishioners were a bit doubtful over the choice of young Dale. His ideas and assurance disturbed them. But John Angell James was not disturbed. Quietly he went around among those who were hesitant. "Don't worry about Dale," he would say, "for the young man is all right. He has the root of the matter in him. Wait and give him a chance."

● *Experience Remakes the Minister*

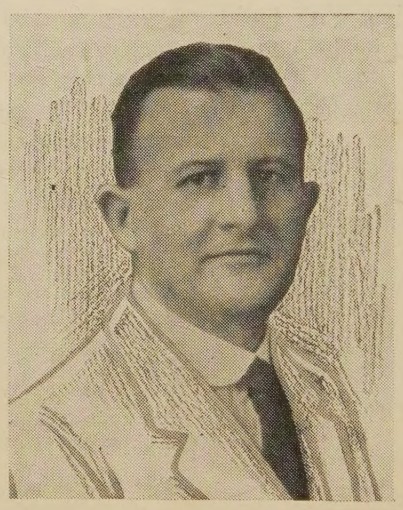
That story suggests my theme better than any definition I could provide. I am anxious to deal with that inner development which begins when we assume our first charge, a development which touches in a profound manner upon every aspect of what we are and seek to be as ministers of Christ's gospel. Young men on the day of their ordination differ from one another in ways obvious to themselves—in their theological opinions, for example. Twenty or thirty years later, if they have been loyal to Christ, these same men would be far more impressed by that which binds them together beneath the surface differences which had formerly seemed important. In ways which are difficult to describe and which defy exact analysis, and which most certainly transcend the varied theological emphases in which we were trained, we ministers are made and molded by the demands and discipline of our responsibility as stewards of the mysteries of God. It is of that making and molding process that I desire to write. It concerns our inner selves. It is the process into which John Angell James was sure that young Dale would enter.

● *The Necessity of Struggle*

In the treatment of this theme one can only be impressionistic, for the goal is too elusive to permit any other form of treatment. Order, logic and precision can hardly be applied. Nevertheless, in thinking over the fruitage of soul which the years of ministerial service make available for us, three words suggest themselves, each word a central phase of our development. The three words are: struggle, growth and communion.

At the turn of the century Principal Marcus Dods wrote a letter to his young friend and former student, Henry Sloane Coffin. He intimated that he did not envy the younger generation of preachers who were coming on. Then he reconsidered his statement. He decided that he did envy them. "But," he added, "it will be a hard fight."

One does not have to be a veteran of many years standing to know the truth of that prophecy. It has been and still is a hard fight. Go back no more than twenty years and remember



Frank Fitt

some of the things that have challenged us. The World War; the mad decade of the 'twenties; and now, with suffering and starvation all about us, daily dealing with fundamental human need, the long drawn out uncertainty as to whether civilization will ever be able to regain its balance—these are some of the fearful phases of the times in which we have preached. Grant that these terrible realities are a vindication of our gospel, grant that in times past, not often, but more than once, that gospel has come through such fires of antagonism purified and strengthened, the fact remains that men can preach through such times only in agony of soul. It has been and remains a moral, spiritual and intellectual struggle.

● *Marks of the Conflict*

It is scarcely possible that the superficial level of the old-fashioned proof-text preacher could satisfy any minister in these last twenty years. The tribe which he represented must be extinct now. At any rate such a minister is the very antithesis of what any minister must be at the present time. If we have been faithful to our charge, if we have tried to preach Christ's message, then we should be able to compile our own private list matching that mentioned by the Apostle Paul in the opening verses of II Corinthians, verse 6. Joy and confidence and triumph are part of our portion; but we have also known depression and weariness and defeat. If we have lived in a land where civilization has become too kind to scourge our bodies we should be ashamed if we do not bear some marks of our punishment upon our souls. We can look back upon moods of tranquil calm, oases in the desert of our affliction; but, surely—and thousands of ministers will agree with me—the more constant note of our ministry has been one of struggle.

● *Growth of Mind and Soul*

There is one chief reward for anyone who endures suffering and interprets his experience in positive terms. That reward is growth of mind and soul. Under ordinary conditions any minister who has been at his task for ten years or more will be a bigger, braver and more useful servant of Christ. Under the extraordinary conditions which have engulfed us growth has been a necessity of survival to a far greater degree than in most periods. What is meant by growth of mind and soul? In the chapter in II Corinthians already mentioned the Apostle Paul lists some key-words. Here they are: "patience," "labors," "watchings," "fastings," "pureness," "knowledge," "longsuffering," "kindness," "the Holy Ghost," "love unfeigned," "the word of truth," "the power of God," "the armor of righteousness," "honor," "good report." I am assuming that all of these key-words have a more vital meaning for us now than on the day we were ordained. That meaning has become vital for us out of a thousand incidents connected with our pastoral and preaching experience: the time we sat up all night with a stricken man who threatened suicide, the time a new book opened the door of a new appreciation of the New Testament message, the time when all our friends and all our worldy wisdom said one thing and what we later knew to be

(Continued on page 24)

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

AS THE YEAR comes to an end, the most exciting thing in the life of the churches is the discovery that an intensive and unheralded campaign designed to convert the churches of the country into a commercial market for the profit of a private corporation and such manufacturers as the corporation may select, has gained great headway even to the very verge of success. I cannot let this issue of The Pulpit go to its readers without expressing my conviction that the success of this project means the humiliation, the cheapening and possibly the dividing of Christian churches all over the land. Its ultimate success is unbelievable, but it can be stopped at this late date only by every highminded pastor standing in his place and showing the women of his congregation how demoralizing to the spiritual life and the ethical purpose of the church this thing will be. I have no space here in which to make an analysis of the so-called Goodwin plan, but the imagination of each individual minister can surely see the baneful effects upon religion if it is deliberately and systematically tied up with commercialism. It must suffice to say that in a wide correspondence on the subject I have been unable to find any religious journal or church leader who is willing to write a reasoned defense of the scheme. Standing at the gate of the temple, I believe our ministers will say—calmly, gently, but with moral authority—"This scheme to commercialize religion shall not pass!"

It Shall Not Pass!

The Book of the Month

MARTIN LUTHER, OAK OF SAXONY. *By Edwin P. Booth. Round Table Press, $2.50.*

THE four hundred and fiftieth anniversary year (1933) of the birth of Luther has been utilized, I have no doubt, by many ministers as an occasion to refresh and to extend their acquaintance with the historic circumstances out of which the Protestant reformation arose. Professor Booth (of Boston University) is one of several scholars to retell the story of the heroic figure who stands at the center of that upheaval in Christendom. He gives a friendly portrait in which the hero is perhaps too much always a hero, but the book is not thereby lessened in its value for its author's purpose. The reformation is in for a profound and critical re-evaluation, and it is good to know that scholars of high rank and competence are now at work on it. (I understand that Professor Wilhelm Pauck of Chicago Theological Seminary, among others, will shortly have a book ready.) But meanwhile this biographical work by Professor Booth has an important place in rehearsing the story and whetting our appetites for more critical work later on. It tells vividly the development of Luther's mind from the moment of taking the vow of an Augustinian monk, through his growing disillusionment with respect to Rome, his break with Rome over her abuses, and the eventual shift of his attack from the abuses to the institution itself. The deeper problem of the reformation is the social problem—concerned with those contributory political and economic factors which joined with Luther's ecclesiastical and theological protest to effectuate the great schism. Into these Mr. Booth does not go with any detail, but one cannot go into them until one has clearly envisaged the human story which this book presents in such fascinating fashion.

A Thought for the Month

OUR human experience moves in rhythms. We could hardly get on without those ever recurring festivals which have become standardized in the calendar. Each anniversary has its own mood, but each calls us to a new beginning—of patriotism (Fourth of July), of human nobility (Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays), of appreciative reorientation (Thanksgiving day), of our sense of life's perspective (Easter), of the nearness of heaven (Christmas), and of the open road ahead (New Year's day). At each anniversary we begin anew, with fresh insight and a sense of reinforcement. But these new beginnings are spaced too far apart. The rhythmic swing is too wide. Our soul needs lesser rhythms also, more frequent alternations between action and celebration, between outer and inner, between doing and being, between ambition, planning, execution on one side and renewal, reorientation and insight on the other. This is what prayer does for us. It is a solitary festival of the soul. It may be celebrated at any time, though it too may have its times and days—at dawn, before sleep, a moment at noonday and perhaps especially on the quiet Sabbath. The essence of prayer is that it is our way of getting a new start. In the life of action our feet become tangled with errors, indirections, futilities. We must shake ourselves free of them. To go on is to court sure failure. Prayer is our chance to be free, to get back to a new beginning, to find the right road again, to set our feet in what the precious scripture calls "a large place," to adjust our hearts to the neglected realities, and so to bring our modest human lives into the vast sweep of Destiny which we now know as the Father's will. Prayer is never unanswered. Carrying its own authority, each prayer moment is remembered in the heat of action. Whatever other gifts it brings or may bring it always brings new insight which comes as a gift of grace while we tarry in the conscious company of the Father. Henceforth our burden is easier to carry, our practical purposes and plans are more simple and more wise, because in prayer we see life whole and find meaning for our own humble part in it.

Prayer as a New Start

Charles Clayton Morrison

The February and March numbers of

The Christian Century Pulpit

will include sermons especially selected for the Lenten season. Ministers will find in these issues a wealth of homiletic suggestion, as well as inspiration for their devotional living and thinking. There will be sermons on Christ, on the Cross, on the development of the inner life.

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY PULPIT continually anticipates the homiletic needs of its readers, and its Lenten numbers, Thanksgiving numbers, Christmas numbers, etc., have proved of inestimable value to the thousands of ministers who have read the Pulpit since its beginning four years ago.

PREACHER PROBLEM articles by Hugh T. Kerr, Carl S. Patton, Bruce S. Wright and others will appear in early issues.

The special Congregational-Christian number of the Pulpit is scheduled for early Spring. Definite announcement will be made in a forthcoming issue.

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY PULPIT is the Minister's Professional Magazine. Do not miss a single number! *$2.00 a year.*

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The Minister's Inner Growth

(Continued from page 22)

the Voice of God said another thing and we had the strength and faith to heed the latter. This is the meaning of growth.

Some of us were brought up to be fundamentalists. Some of us were brought up under different influences within the Christian church. I take it to be one of the most hopeful signs of the times, one of the certain marks of growth, that these dwarfing labels are going into the discard. The truth of the matter is that the needs within and without us have taken us far beyond sectarian classifications. Each school had a truth to offer; but we are being carried to a point now in which we are finding something at once deeper and higher. No minister who sits in at a round-table discussion conducted by E. Stanley Jones can fail to recognize that he expresses a note, new and yet old, scientific in its approach and yet more than scientific, which marks him apart as one who has a special message for our day. This, too, means growth.

The third word that has meaning in our inner development as ministers is communion. I am not thinking now of those periods in our lives which can be classified as devotional in the usually accepted meaning. I refer, rather, to an increasing sense on our part of God as the supreme Power and Presence as we pursue the whole round of our task. Intimacy is a rather daring word with which to characterize the relationship, but I use it knowing full well that for all my fellow ministers who have found it the danger of contempt has been lost in the privilege of reverence. Verily, verily, if we are to interpret God we must have intimate dealings with God.

● *Communion with God*

It is probably a sound instinct which compels most of us to remain reticent and tongue-tied regarding this phase of our spiritual experience. There is a type of witness about God's dealings with us which indicates our shallowness or our lack of good taste rather than our consecration. At the same time there are occasions and places when such reticence must be broken down because it has become the defensive armor of our pride or our cowardice. Indeed I would go further and claim that the times demand that particularly those of us who have been fortunate enough to be trained for our task in colleges, universities and theological seminaries, who have attempted to keep ourselves informed on all that touches on our message significantly, shall be far less chary in giving expression to the authenticity and conviction of our own deeper experiences. I make this assertion because at present this type of witness to the redemptive power of the God of Christ is in danger of becoming the identification mark of a group or groups rather than the common expression of the church as a whole. Furthermore, such witnessing is always an essential ingredient of the preaching that really matters and makes a difference in other lives.

Much more might be said, for our inner development as ministers is an endless process and as broad as life itself, but certainly struggle, growth and communion are dominant phases of it. Any minister who has known them will know much else that involves them. If he has proved himself in the difficult time now passing when the tide has been going out he should be able to prove himself also in the time even now upon us, in some ways more difficult, when the tide is beginning to come in.